

Message Text

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13

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-04 AID-20 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 OPR-02 SY-04 DRC-01 EB-11 SCI-06 /137 W

----- 008236

R 140431Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6933

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, MY

SUBJ: PROBABLE NEW ROUND OF STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS

REF: A. KUALA LUMPUR 1834; B. KUALA LUMPUR 1096

C. KUALA LUMPUR A-211, 12/3/73

1. SUMMARY: NEW STUDENT/YOUTH DEMONSTRATIONS MAY OCCUR IN NEXT FEW WEEKS AS MALAYSIA CELEBRATES NATIONAL YOUTH WEEK AND STUDENTS START BACK TO CAMPUSES FOR NEW SCHOOL YEAR IN EARLY JUNE. MARA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, CLOSED BY GOVT BECAUSE OF MID-APRIL DEMONSTRATIONS, REMAINS CLOSED BUT SENTIMENT IS BUILDING UP THAT CAMPUS SHOULD BE REOPENED SOON. AT THIS JUNCTURE PRINCIPAL ISSUES OF STUDENT/YOUTH DISCONTENT ARE DEGREE STATUS FOR SOME MARA COURSES OF STUDY, HIGH COST OF LIVING, UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES ACT WHICH PROSCRIBES STUDENT POLITICAL ACTIVITY, AND CORRUPTION IN GOVT; FOREIGN RELATIONS ISSUES ARE NOT PROMINENT, ALTHOUGH SOME STUDENT GROUPS TRYING TO KEEP THESE ALIVE.

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END SUMMARY.

2. MARA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, CLOSED AFTER MID-APRIL DEMONSTRATIONS DEMANDING PARITY WITH UNIVERSITIES, REMAINS SHUTTERED, ALTHOUGH PRESS AND POLITICAL FIGURES ARE BEGINNING TO AGITATE FOR CAMPUS REOPENING. SETTLEMENT OF UNIVERSITY-STATUS ISSUE DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE IN SIGHT, BUT GOVT AND ACADEMIC SOURCES INDICATE THAT UNIVERSITY DEGREES MAY BE AWARDED FOR SEVERAL SPECIALIZED COURSES OF STUDY CULMINATING IN EXTERNAL EXAMINATIONS SUCH AS ACCOUNTANCY AND ARCHITECTURE.

3. CELEBRATION OF ANNUAL NATIONAL YOUTH WEEK MAY 9-15 COULD PRODUCE SOME VENTING OF STUDENT/YOUTH SENTIMENTS. HOWEVER, YOUTH WEEK ACTIVITIES ARE GENERALLY CLOSELY CONTROLLED AND FINANCED BY GOVT, THUS IT UNLIKELY THESE CELEBRATIONS WILL GET OUT OF HAND. CRITICAL PERIOD WILL BE END OF MAY - EARLY JUNE WHEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS RETURN TO CAMPUSES FOR NEW SCHOOL YEAR. NORMALLY STUDENTS HAVE CONSIDERABLE FREE TIME DURING INITIAL WEEKS OF NEW TERM, THUS PRESENTING BEST OPPORTUNITY FOR ACTIVIST LEADERS AND GROUPS TO PROMOTE DEMONSTRATIONS. ALREADY THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT MAJOR RALLY IS SLATED FOR MAY 27 WHEN COMBINED UNIVERSITY AND TECHNICAL SCHOOL STUDENT BODIES WILL REPORTEDLY PROTEST UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES ACT WHICH LIMITS STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICS (SEE PARA 4, REF B).

4. ISSUES COMMANDING STUDENT/YOUTH ATTENTION INCLUDE RISING COST OF LIVING, DEMAND FOR NATIONALISTIC ECONOMIC POLICIES (EG, ANTI-JAPAN, ANTI-FOREIGN OWNERSHIP AND INVESTMENT), MARA INSTITUTE STATUS, CORRUPTION IN GOVERNMENT (INCLUDING ALLEGED CORRUPTION OF SELANGOR CHIEF MINISTER DATUK HARUN IDRIS), AND POLITICAL "RIGHTS" OF STUDENTS REVOLVING ABOUT UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES ACT. FOREIGN AFFAIRS ISSUES HAVE GENERALLY BEEN DOWNPLAYED RECENTLY, ALTHOUGH JOINT MEETING OF MALAY, SCIENCE (PENANG) AND SINGAPORE UNIVERSITIES STUDENT UNIONS APRIL 29-30 HERE DECLARED "SOLIDARITY" ON FOLLOWING POINTS: CRITICISM OF GOP FOR USING FORCE AGAINST PHILIPPINES, MUSLIMS, SITUATION WHICH STUDENTS SAID COULD LEAD TO "NEW VIETNAM"; OPPOSITION TO KRA Isthmus CANAL AND USE OF NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVES FOR EXCAVATING CANAL; CLOSING INDIAN OCEAN AND MALACCA STRAIT TO ALL MILITARY VESSELS EXCEPT THOSE OF NATIONS IN REGION; PASSAGE THROUGH MALACCA STRAIT ONLY FOR COMMERCIAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SHIPS "NOT DANGEROUS" TO ENVIRONMENT; AND FREEDOM OF SPEECH FOR STUDENTS WITHOUT FEAR OR REPRESSION. JOINT STATEMENT ALSO SAID THERE SHOULD BE FREE INTERCHANGE WITH ALL STUDENTS IN ASIA WITHOUT REGARD TO IDEOLOGIES OF NATIONS CONCERNED.

5. STUDENT ACTION FRONT (SAF) PROCLAIMED IN MID-MARCH (REF B) MET AGAIN MAY 4 TO SET UP SECRETARIAT AND TO REFINE "ACTION" PROGRAM. NATIONAL UNION OF MALAYSIAN STUDENTS (NUMS OR PKPM),

NATIONAL UNION OF MALAYSIAN MUSLIM STUDENTS (NUMMS OR PKPIM) AND FEDERATION OF PENINSULAR MALAY STUDENTS (GPMS), WHICH REPRESENTS SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS, AGREED THAT MARA CLOSING IS MOST PRESSING ISSUE AND CONSEQUENTLY DEMANDED RE-OPENING OF CAMPUS WITHIN TWO WEEKS, PROMPT HOLDING OF EXAMINATIONS DELAYED BY DEMONSTRATIONS AND CLOSING OF CAMPUS, AND EXPRESSION OF GOM VIEWS ON UNIVERSITY STATUS QUESTION.

6. COMMENT: IN COMING WEEKS WE WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY SEE RESURGENCE OF STUDENT RALLIES AND DEMONSTRATIONS BUT, IF QUICK REPRESSION OF MARA DEMONSTRATION ON ORDER OF HOME AFFAIRS MINISTER GHAZALI SHAFIE IS ANY INDICATION, GOM IS DETERMINED TO KEEP SITUATION IN CHECK AND STUDENTS WILL BE CONFINED TO CAMPUSES. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT STUDENT ACTIVISM IS IN ANY RESPECT CRITICAL TO FORTUNES OF GOM BUT IS UNSETTLING FACTOR AS GOVT MOVES TOWARD GENERAL ELECTIONS. UNDERHILL

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